CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

By ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

LAST Wednesday was Joseph Conrad's sixty-fifth birthday and with a timeliness that may be considered as significant, Messrs. Doubleday, Page & Co. are bringing out his volume of essays, "Notes on Life and Letters." There is always so much to say about a new book by Conrad that what is said in the end is naturally a matter of selection. For example, one chapter in the present volume, that on Stephen Crane, recalls an exceedingly vivid and interesting American personality. Twenty-odd years ago Crane was one of the most conspicuous figures in American literary life. Here was a youngster in his early twenties who in "The Red Badge of Courage" pictured the grim reality of war in a manner that amazed the living veterans of the four years struggle between North and South. Here was a youth who in "Maggie; a Girl of the Streets" seemed to be blazing a new trail in a certain vein of sordid realism. But Crane died very young. How far he might have gone is problematical. The new generation that is coming up knows little of him.

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RICHARD HARDING DAVIS once wrote a very clever story of the Spanish-American War Called "The Derelict." The figure of the Derelict was generally supposed to have been drawn from Stephen Crane. Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey, and was educated at Lafayette College and Syracuse University. While an undergraduate he used to spend much of his spare time in the typesetting rooms of local newspapers. In 1892 he found his way to New York with the idea of going into newspaper work. Day after day he tramped Park Row, climbing grimy stairways, timidly approaching "city editors," until at length, when on the verge of absolute destitution, he found work in a mercantile house. His leisure hours were given over to the writing of stories, and to rambles through the New York East Side. "Maggie" was his first book. It was repeatedly rejected, but finally a publisher was found who offered to bring it out at the author's expense. Crane accepted the chance, literally living on bread and water to save money with which to pay the publisher.

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"THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE" was written in 1893, the same year as "Maggie; a Girl of the Streets." There was at the time current a story to the effect that Crane had turned out the war story of 60,000 words in three days time. That yarn was manifestly an absurdity. Allowing the author twelve hours out of the seventy-two for sleep it would have meant sixty hours of labor at the rate of a thousand words an hour. The success of the book was immediate, not only in this country but also in England. The story was at first commonly accepted as having been written by one who had lived vividly through the War of Secession and the discovery that its author had been born five years after the termination of that struggle provoked universal surprise. "The Red Badge of Courage" made Stephen Crane highly desirable as a war correspondent when trouble came in the Balkans and later in Cuba, and it was probably his work in that capacity that suggested to Richard Harding Davis the plot of "The Derelict."

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JOSEPH CONRAD of course knew Stephen Crane in England where Crane went after he had been brought into bitter contact with the New York police as a result of his defense of an unfortunate woman who he claimed had been unjustly arrested. In England Crane was a great social and literary success. Mr. Conrad thus records his first impression of the American: "His manner was very quiet, his personality at first sight interesting, and he talked slowly with an intonation which on some people, mainly Americans, had, I believe, a jarring effect. But not on me. Whatever he said had a personal note, and he expressed himself with a graphic simplicity which was extremely engaging. He knew little of literature, either of his own country or any other, but he was himself a wonderful artist in words whenever he took a pen into his hand. Then his gift came out—and it was seen then to be much more than mere felicity of language."

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STEPHEN CRANE died in Baden, Germany, in 1900, at 30 years of age. Conrad records: "I saw him for the last time on his last day in England. It was in Dover, in a big hotel, in a bedroom with a large window looking on to the sea. He had been very ill and Mrs. Crane was taking him to some place in Germany, but one glance at that wasted face was enough to tell me that it was the most forlorn of all hopes. The last words that he breathed out to me were: 'I am tired. Give my love to your wife and child.' When I stopped at the door for another look I saw that he had turned his head on the pillow and was staring wistfully out of the window at the sails of a cutter yacht that glided slowly across the frame, like a dim shadow against the gray sky."

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ON the writers about the romance of the sea no man living to-day is better qualified to write than Joseph Conrad. Summing up Marryat he says that to the author of "Midshipman Easy" the sea was not an element. "It was a tle way a factor of existence and, for all its greatness, it is always in touch with the men, who, bound on errands of war or gain, traverse its immense solitudes."

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UNIFORM with the editions of Gustave Flaubert's "Madame Bovary," the Abbe Prevost's "Manon Lescaut," Theophile Gautier's "Madamoiselle de Maupin," and the "Germinie Lacerteux," of Edmond and Jules De Goncourt, now appears Emile Zola's "Nana" (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.). All five books contain introductions by Mr. Burton Rascoe, and the translations are in the main excellent when one takes into consideration the fact that there has never been and there will never be a translation to be universally indorsed as adequate. Strictly speaking, not one of these books is *virginibus puerisque*. All of them contain strong meat; especially "Nana." Why has no English or American publisher ever attempted to present the work of Zola to the mature and discriminating in what seems to be the logical way? It would be a simple matter of giving the original French text in full at the bottom of the page wherever an expurgation of the translation is deemed advisable.

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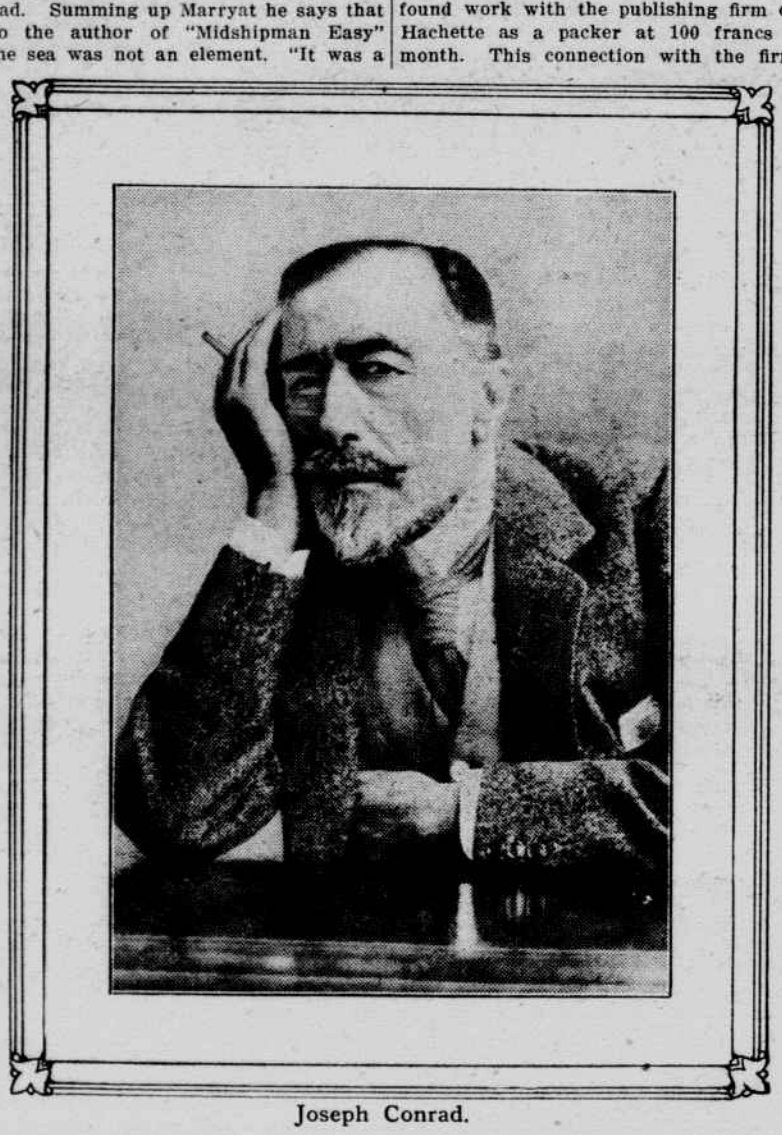
IN his introduction to "Nana" Mr. Rascoe touches upon the arduous youth through which Zola won to eminence as the historian of the Rougon-Macquart family. "At the age of twenty-five he was earning only forty sous a day and living with his mother and Paul Cezanne, the painter, in the Rue Saint-Victor. Abject poverty made it necessary for him to part with his mother, who found work as a seamstress. He lived on bread, cheese, fruit and water, deprived himself of tobacco and all luxuries. One after another of his pawnable articles went to the usurer for bare necessities. Finally he found work with the publishing firm of Hachette as a packer at 100 francs a month. This connection with the firm



Joseph Conrad.

gave him a tentative confidence in himself as a writer. . . . One day Zola showed his employer a collection of poems he had written. Hachette . . . did not bring them out was impressed enough to increase Zola's salary to 200 francs a month and to give him work as a reader."

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MANY years ago Mr. Mayo W. Hazeltine of THE SUN summed up what Zola tried to do in the portrait of the depraved heroine of "Nana." He wrote: "She is conceived as some fair ogress into whose yawning cave multitudes of men in hurried and endless procession descend and are engulfed. There is room for all ranks and grades of this social hierarchy. . . . It is merely indispensable that each shall bring an offering of some kind in his hand. He that cannot defray the charge of the establishment may pay the dressmaker; another shall furnish pin money; another trinkets and bouquets. There is a certain breadth and grandeur in her insatiate greed and comprehensive harlotry; her net drags great and small; she seems to have infected a whole city. . . . She has grown like a rank weed amid the garbage of the Parisian pavement. She has the gorged luxuriance of a plant whose turgid leaves betray its compost bed. With the superb curves of her delicate flesh she avenges the beggars and outcasts who gave her birth. She becomes a majestic force of nature, a pestiferous yeast, tainting and disintegrating Paris, turning it sour like curdled milk."

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THIS is the particular week of the year when, as an aftermath of the football season, sports writers all over the country are indulging in the utterly meaningless but harmless and diverting task of selecting "All-America" elevens. Why not a lineup of what might be termed the All-America football stories of the autumn of 1922? To start the ball rolling this department suggests as two very good football stories of the season Mr. Lawrence Perry's "The Winning Play," appearing in the November *Red Book*, and Mr. Wadsworth Camp's "The Victor," which ran through two recent numbers of *Collier's Weekly*. Of course the perfect football story is as rare as the perfect end or the perfect quarterback, and each of the tales mentioned has its perceptible flaw. "The Winning Play," as was pointed out in a previous issue of the book section, involved a curious blunder; and "The Victor" was obviously intended as propaganda; all be it propaganda of a very healthy sort.

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EVERY now and then some person with a taste for both literature and American football offers an "All-Fiction" eleven, picking out his favorite brawny heroes of the story teller's creation and assigning them to places along an imaginary line and in an imaginary backfield. Although the matter is not exactly one of cosmic importance, a word as to the ultimate source of the whimsicality. The first "All-America" eleven was picked by Mr. Walter Camp in 1889. The first "All-Fiction" eleven appeared in print just ten years later in the issue of the *Bookman* for November, 1899. It was to meet the requirements of a game very different from the open football of to-day that the writer of 1889 selected his lineup. Then there were no forward passes, and no neutral zone, and far less need for consideration of the qualifications best adapted to the subtleties of the secondary defense.

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HERE is the first "All-America" fictior eleven:

Left End	Pan Michael.
Left Tackle	The Black Knight.
Left Guard	Pan Longin.
Center	John Ridd.
Right Guard	Ursus.
Right Tackle	Taffy Wynne.
Right End	Aramis.
Quarter	D'Artagnan.
Left Half	Ivanhoe.
Right Half	Porthos.
Fullback	Athos

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TWENTY-THREE years later the writer would certainly select an entirely different eleven. In the first place, some of the characters may puzzle readers of to-day. But at the end of the eighteen nineties the late Henryk Sienkiewicz's "Quo Vadis?" with its thrilling picture of Ursus, the Christian giant from the North, tossing the aurochs in the Coliseum at Rome, was a "best-seller"; and discriminating readers were familiar with Pan Michael Volodyovsky and Longin Podbipienta, characters of the same author's famous trilogy of the wars of the Polish Commonwealth, "Fire and Sword," "The Deluge," and "Pan Michael." Of the other brawny figures in the lineup, Taffy Wynne is from Du Maurier's "Trilby," John Ridd from

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